(b) whether such a facility is available in the booking counter itself; and

(c) if so, the measures being taken to immediately do away with such a disparity and if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA) : (a) The senior citizen concession is granted, in Mail/Express fares of all classes including unreserved classes and fares of Rajdhani/ Shatabadi/Jan Shatabadi trains, at the booking/reservation counters only.

(b) The facility is available only at the booking/reservation counters.

(c) As a matter of policy, all concessions are granted at booking/reservation counters only and no concession is granted in train.

Benefits to Senior Citizens

5223. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) what are the age limits prescribed for senior citizens (both male and female) and what are the benefits allowed to them for performing rail journey;

(b) whether Government are aware that wait listed tickets issued to senior citizens and other eligible for concessional tickets are rarely confirmed and preference to confirm the tickets is given to those who pay full amount for the tickets; and

(c) if so, what are the details in this regard and whether the existing norms for confirmation of tickets are proposed to be modified to benefit the senior citizens and others ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA) : (a) All senior citizens, men as well as women, of minimum 60 years of age are entitled to 30% concession in Mail/ Express fares of all classes and fares of Rajdhani/ Shatabdi/Jan Shatabdi group of trains. The other benefits granted to senior citizens are as under :—

(i) On major computerized Passenger Reservation System (PRS) locations, senior citizens are dealt with on a separate counter.

(ii) In the computerized PRS, there is a provision to provide lower berths automatically to male passengers of 60 years and above and female passengers of 45 years and above subject to availability of accommodation at the time of booking.

(iii) Instructions also exist for allotment of lower berths falling vacant in the train due to non-turning up of passengers to senior citizens by Train Conductor/TTE on first come first served basis.

(iv) Separate accommodation has been earmarked for senior citizens in suburban sections of Central and Western Railways.

(b) and (c) The passenger reservation system, on cancellation of reservation, automatically allocates the released accommodation to the next passenger in the RAC/waiting list, without any preference to any category.

New pension scheme in railways

5224. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the total expenses on pension and salaries of Railway employees during the last three years; category-wise and year-wise;

(b) whether the Indian Railway proposes to join the new pension scheme;

(c) if so, what are the details of the new pension scheme and how this will benefit the Railways and its current and former employees; and

(d) what is the reaction of the employees to the scheme ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA) : (a) The total expenses on pension and salaries of Railway's employees during the last three years; category-wise and year- wise are as under :

(Rs. in crores)

Category	Year	Salary	Pension	Total
Group 'A' and 'B'	1999-00	313.21	98.55	411.76
	2000-01	337.56	146.03	483.59
	2001-02	341.68	148.34	490.02
Group 'C'	1999-00	8614.04	1771.92	10385.96
	2000-01	9343.4	2762.79	12106.19
	2001-02	9429.7	2905.87	12335.57
Group'D'	1999-00	3730.89	857.27	4588.16
	2000-01	3892.21	1181.81	5074.02
	2001-02	3818.19	1122.14	4940.33